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## INFORMATION REPORT

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COUNTRY Indochina

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SUBJECT Current Status of Indochinese Coal Mines

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1. The present coal production of Indochina (1949) is approximately 390,000 metric tons a year of which about one-fourth is exported. This is only a fraction of prewar years when production exceeded 2,300,000 metric tons and over 1,500,000 tons were exported. A few small mines are operating but the only large mines currently being worked are those of the Ste. Francaise des Charbonnages du Tonkin at Hongay. These mines are open pits. The underground mines are flooded and will take some time to be rehabilitated. They need pumps, re-timbering, and new machinery. Adequate repairs would take at least 12 months.
2. The chief current difficulty is the shortage of labor. Most of the miners have left the mining districts and the French company has to recruit and train new miners. Many are afraid to stay at the mines due to fear of raids by Viet Minh forces. Since the company is unable to get sufficient labor, they have started mechanizing the mines. They have received some mining equipment and trucks from the USA but they need much more. However, the French Government will not allow the company sufficient foreign exchange to purchase the equipment that they need.
3. All of the coal mines of Indochina are now under the control of French forces but guerrilla raids are troublesome. Ste. Francaise de Charbonnage at Dong-Trieu is rehabilitating its mines but it will be many months before they begin operating and they are not expected to add much to Indochina's output until 1952.
4. Before the war, Ste. Francaise Charbonnages du Tonkin used to produce about 1,500,000 metric tons of anthracite a year and ship it to China, Japan, Hong Kong, and even France. Now the French Government insists that the company supply Indochina's needs before exporting any coal. Due to the rebellion and disrupted rail traffic, local consumption is only a fraction of pre-war.

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